

# The National Grange

Of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry

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*Building Communities*

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Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Robert McDowell  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

FURTHER INQUIRY INTO CERTAIN ISSUES IN THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE-  
INTERCARRIER COMPENSATION TRANSFORMATION PROCEEDING

WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 07-135, 05-337, 03-109; CC Docket No. 01-92, 96-45; GN  
Docket No. 09-51

Dear Mr. Chairman and Commissioners:

Established in 1867, the National Grange is America's oldest rural advocacy group with more than 200,000 members in 2,700 communities throughout 40 states of the United States. On August 3, 2011, we announced our support for "America's Broadband Connectivity Plan," which was submitted by six broadband providers to your agency in their effort to speed broadband deployment to the more than 4 million Americans residing in rural areas.

Today, we file this comment in the above-referenced proceeding to urge the Federal Communications Commission to adopt this proposal, which we believe will assist in transitioning the federal Universal Service Fund (USF) to focus on connecting Americans to broadband; providing them with phone service, as well as VoIP and internet access.

Affordable access to broadband for those in rural America is one of the National Grange's ten priority issues included in the "2011 Blue Print for Rural America;" a document that is shaped by member-initiated issues that have been supported at the local, state and national Grange levels. We seek affordable access to modern communications technologies for farmers, ranchers and rural Americans because being connected is a critical component in keeping rural America competitive, healthy and educated.

In the past, the National Grange was hesitant to comment on the restructured utilization of USF monies for broadband build-out because our organization wanted to make sure that our rural members would not be stranded without phone service in the transition. However, in reviewing carefully the "America's Broadband Connectivity Plan," we believe this unified proposal brings together both traditionally rural and national carriers to create a concentrated approach for our members.

The industry consensus proposal also recommends a transition similar to the ones made in the National Broadband Plan. We support this and many other proposals in the National Broadband Plan that support deployment of affordable broadband in rural areas. Therefore, the National Grange urges the Commission to take action on these measures as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicole Palya Wood", is displayed on a light blue rectangular background.

Nicole Palya Wood  
National Grange Legislative Director